



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Friday, August 11, 2000

COUNTY POSTS WEST NILE VIRUS INFO ON THE WEB

Information Phone Line Also Established

The Monroe County Health Department has established a West Nile virus (WNV) web page and a recorded telephone information line at www.co.monroe.ny.us/health/westnile.stm and (716) 234-9600 respectively. The information will be updated regularly if West Nile virus is detected within Monroe County.

Health officials request that residents call them with reports of a dead bird only if it is a crow, and only if the bird has been dead for less than 24 hours (i.e. if you observed it die or it was found on your property during the past 24 hours). If a dead crow meeting these criteria is found over the weekend, health officials ask that you wear gloves, double bag the crow and keep it in a cooler with ice. State health officials will not test birds not meeting these criteria.

Nearly one-third of the counties in New York State have discovered WNV, including several upstate counties. New York State health officials believe the virus has likely spread throughout the state. Monroe County health officials have submitted several crows for testing and are awaiting results.

West Nile virus is an infection that is transmitted by mosquitoes. Most people will either experience no symptoms or will have a slight fever, headache or body aches. It usually takes between 5-15 days for symptoms to develop. In the most serious cases, infection can result in encephalitis, which is an inflammation of the brain. Less than 1% of people infected with WNV will have symptoms serious enough to require hospitalization. While there is no specific treatment or vaccine for WNV, most people fully recover. People older than 50 are at greatest risk from WNV.

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Preventive steps to reduce the likelihood of exposure to WNV include:

- reduce time spent outdoors when mosquitoes are most active (between dusk and dawn)
- use insect repellents containing the material DEET
- wear long sleeves and pants when practical
- eliminate standing water on your property where mosquitoes breed
- assure that all screens are in good repair

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For More Information Contact:

Communications and Special Events at 428-2380

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